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The Twenty-First-Century University Press: Assessing the Past, Envisioning the Future

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The Twenty-First-Century University Press: Assessing the Past, Envisioning the Future

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The Past of University Presses

Leila Salisbury: This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Association of American University Presses, or the AAUP. Collaboration among university presses began as early as the 1920s with discussions of a joint catalog, and an organized meeting in 1928 included representatives from Columbia, Harvard, Princeton, Yale, Johns Hopkins, North Carolina, Duke, Chicago, Pennsylvania, Stanford, and Oxford. According to a recent history of the AAUP, at that meeting:

Cooperation among university presses was born amongst the luxurious surroundings of the original Waldorf-Astoria. When the Hotel Pennsylvania and the Commodore proved too expensive, someone negotiated a rate of \$6/single or \$9/double at one of the world's most famous hotels. The organizers were quite pleased—University of Pennsylvania Press director Phelps Soule confessed a long-held “ambition to lunch someday at the Waldorf, as it looks very grand from the top of the Fifth Avenue Bus.”

I mention this to emphasize that the vast majority of modern university presses are nonprofit entities and have a long and illustrious history of thrift.

Fast forward to the year 2012, which finds university presses at a moment of scrutiny as well as exploration. Money and mission are both equally on our minds as press directors, as the former makes the fulfillment of the latter possible. Though our missions as scholarly publishers have not changed significantly in the

last 75 years, the path to arrive at that nirvana known as “break-even status” has changed significantly, and many would argue that they’re not even sure where that path is anymore, or that now there are different paths for different types of university presses.

So before our main speakers Doug Armato and Alison Mudditt examine university press publishing in the past, present, and future, there are a few things I’d like you to know about university presses. As I’ve mentioned, we are nonprofits, and very different from commercial academic publishers. (Though as a colleague of mine at another press will say when an author asks him for something really outside of the scope of his budget, “Hey, we’re not that not for profit”). Most of us depend on our home universities for some sort of institutional allocation to get to breakeven. According to the February 2012 AAUP Operating Statistics report, those presses with net sales in the \$1.5–6M range receive host institution support averaging 10–20% of net sales. Very small presses often receive more, larger presses receive significantly less. But what these numbers mean is that 80–90% of operating income for most university presses is generated primarily through sales and grants.

As is true of libraries, even though we are all university presses, we are not the same. What works well for one press may not easily translate for the rest of us. As my marketing director is fond of saying, turning Tolstoy’s famous pronouncement on its head, “Unhappy presses are all alike; every happy press is happy in its own way.” Though we may have each taken our own paths to getting there, nearly all university presses do publish electronic content and are making it a priority. The great majority of us are placing that content with the vendors and platforms you use in your libraries, and we are constantly reevaluating

business strategies and avenues for content discovery and dissemination.

Countless articles and blogs have been written about the so-called crisis in scholarly communication. Some of these writers portray university presses as antiquated operations that are resistant to change and that don't care about—or are unable to meet the needs of—modern users. I have two immediate responses to this. First, I believe this happens, in part, because we as university presses haven't always done a good job of explaining our value and promoting that message to our stakeholders, which include our campuses, libraries, scholarly societies, authors, administrators, and faculty. Truly connecting with your constituents is a very powerful thing and should be done at every possible opportunity. I was fortunate enough to recently spend an hour with one of the Mississippi university presidents, talking about our press's work and exploring the many ways in which the Press's challenges were similar to the challenges he faced in formulating plans for the growth and success of his own campus. At the end of the meeting he said that the press should be getting more money to further fund our thriving program and allow us to make additional technological and infrastructure investments. You will not hear the words "I want to give you more money" very often on a campus these days, and I took this as a potent example of the importance of dialog and of finding commonalities with your stakeholders.

Second, I believe university presses are consistently labeled "in crisis" because we cannot predict exactly what scholarly communication or publishing (and there is an increasing difference between these two things) will look like in 5 years, or even 2. University presses are in the very same boat as libraries, administrators of campus textbook and course management systems, faculty, and campus IT managers. We are firmly in the middle of a period of highly disruptive technological change. The issue is this: old systems no longer work well, there is a new system introduced every 3–6 months, and we simply have no way of guaranteeing that the systems in which we do choose to invest will be the ones that will still serve us well in 2 years. We

are all well acquainted with the effects of this disruptive change, but it does not mean that university presses are inherently broken or irrelevant. It merely means that my crystal ball is just as foggy as yours, and we have to experiment, innovate, listen to our users and customers, and then make it up as we go along.

This is actually deeply reassuring to me. If the real issue were that no one cares about scholarly content, then university press directors and staff should be lying awake nights. The issue instead is that we are charged with finding new ways to fulfill our longtime mission of selecting, developing, editing, producing, marketing, and disseminating high-quality, peer-reviewed scholarship. We as presses can today learn a great deal from academic libraries about the new paths on which scholarship may travel. So I hope this conference, and the official AAUP-sponsored University Press Week that will run November 11–17 and that we're kicking off here, will foster the greater mutual understanding and dialog that will help us find and navigate those future paths. Please take some time to visit www.universitypressweek.org and look at what university presses across the country are doing to connect with their places and their readers.

What Was a University Press?

Douglas Armato: I'm going to take this occasion of the Association of American University Presses' 75th anniversary and of the 36th University Press Week to speak a little more personally than I usually would about our joint enterprise of university press publishing—its past, present, and potential futures.

I: History

What was a University Press? The first book published at an American university was at Harvard in 1636, and the first formal American university press established at Cornell in 1869—heralding a familiar phenomenon of university publishing operations being closed or threatened with closure, the press at Cornell ceased business just 6 years later, in 1884, only to be resuscitated in 1930. The longest continually operating university press was founded at Johns Hopkins in

1878, a press that has remained at the leading edge of our profession, co-founding Project MUSE in cooperation with its parent institution's Milton S. Eisenhower Library in 1985 and, last year, joining with a broad consortium of university presses to add frontlist scholarly e-books to its invaluable platform.

But while university presses have been a part of the North American academic and publishing landscape for over a century and a half, the Association of American University Presses has its roots in 1928, when the directors of 12 presses met at New York's Waldorf Astoria hotel to discuss joint marketing and sales initiatives—it is significant that they were already marketing and sales discussions. The Association itself was founded in 1937—the anniversary we celebrate this year—with 22 members, my Press among them. At the height of the Depression, university presses were being founded at a rate of about one each year, a rate which continued through to the 1970s, when the end of the Federal subsidies for university libraries under the Cold War Era National Defense Education Act began the long slide in library monograph purchases, the “Monograph Crisis,” that gained speed with the “Serials Crisis” of the 1980s and faces new challenges with the movement toward Open Access today. Arguably, then, university presses have been in some form of crisis since the late 1970s, some 35 years ago.

I started my career in university presses in the late 1970s, some 35 years ago. So, startlingly to me anyway, I have been in university presses, with a brief diversion into trade publishing, for almost half of the AAUP's existence, from the apogee of the print age to the brink of what I believe will be a new digital golden age for university presses. When I started in university presses in 1978 at Columbia, over 70% of our book sales were to libraries with the rest—to bookstores, to individuals scholars and graduate students, for course use, and overseas—seen as “icing.” That icing now overwhelms the cake itself, with libraries accounting for only an estimated 20% to 25% of university press sales. (Here, a brief parenthesis to say that the consolidation of the book distribution chain over the past decade has

made it much more difficult to establish fully accurate market statistics). Yet amid this career-long “crisis,” university presses have in fact held their own, with overall sales even increasing by about over 10% the past economically difficult decade. And, I'd argue, we've become more significant culturally and intellectually by paying more attention to the market—by being as concerned with the needs of scholar-readers as scholar-writers.

So why be concerned on this 75th anniversary of the impressively resilient Association of American University Presses? One reason is that the current challenges of the digital environment and Open Access—of what I referred to above as a potential “new digital golden age for university presses”—require a renewed partnership with academic libraries in order to fully realize their promise for scholarship. The second is that academic libraries are struggling with their own budgetary and existential crises, as are the universities that support both libraries and presses. And the third is that library and press relations are increasingly showing signs of fraying, mimicking in several ways the political polarization—the lack of joint problem solving and reaching across the aisles—that besets American society as a whole. These are problems to solve not in the next 35 years of crisis, but in the next 3.5 years of crisis for, as we all know, the economic landscape is shifting rapidly as are the needs of scholars and students and the expectations of university administrators.

II: Eden

I referred earlier to the inversion of the university press book sales from overwhelmingly library-driven three decades ago to overwhelmingly non-library driven today. Some have seen this as evidence of the university press mission as having moved away from that of the university—and scholarship—itsself. Some have spoken of presses as turning away, like Eve and Adam leaving Paradise, from the purity of monographs toward “midlist trade books,” but any look at university press catalogs quickly reveals that those “midlist” trade books are overwhelmingly written by university faculty—they are, in fact, scholarly books, some of the best that we publish. And there is nothing new in this at all. In 1928, 3 years

after my Press's founding, we published a book on healthy eating titled *Prunes or Pancakes* by the Dean of the School of Dentistry at Columbia University. A midlist trade title if there ever was one.

Nevertheless, Kathleen Fitzpatrick's carefully argued and thought-provoking NYU Press book, *Planned Obsolescence: Publishing, Technology, and the Future of the Academy* has traced an earlier model of university publishing from the 1893 founding of the University of California Press to publish works by that institution's own faculty, mostly pamphlets which she sees as proto-blogs, noting that model prevailed for 40 years until about 1930—a decade we'll recognize as that of the creation of the modern university press with the cooperative movement that would result in the formation of the AAUP. A widely-read library blogger extrapolated from Fitzpatrick's account of the early decades of the UC Press, that presses, he makes it sound greedy, even Satanic, "demanded autonomy to broaden their lists and retain their profits."

Anyone who has worked for a university, not to mention a Press, would find comical this idea that a university press thus bullied its parent institution into submitting to its will. Too, this is the period most active for the founding of presses by universities, and they were clearly started as publishing houses rather than the evolved university print shops of that earlier era Fitzpatrick documents—within 18 months of the founding of my own Press in 1925, we had published books by faculty from California, Columbia, George Washington, Johns Hopkins, Northwestern, Smith, and Virginia.

But even more to the point, we should look at the context of this Edenic, prelapsarian university publishing of the 1890s into the 1920s—a period at the beginning of which the entire body of Humanities and Social Science researchers at US universities numbered fewer than 1,000 men (for they were almost all men), and when most library collections were housed in departments and managed by scholars, rather than centralized. Indeed, as the University of Chicago sociologist Andrew Abbott has found, the rise of the modern university press occurred at the same time as the

professionalization of the university libraries and both in response to a dramatic, ten-fold expansion in research faculty between World War I and World War II. "This period," Abbott writes, "produces the first clear evidence of a division between the scholars and the librarians" —note the division here—"the scholars favoring specialized tools and departmental librarians, the librarians universalist tools and centralized libraries." Abbott continues that "the emergence and consolidation of university presses in the 1910s and 1920s was essentially a response of universities to the overburdening of the earlier scholarly publication system." Thus, the birth—and, I would argue, the fate—of the modern university library and university press are intertwined in the professionalization of Higher Education management, with centralized libraries and university presses founded by growing universities to solve, yes, a "crisis in scholarly publishing."

So if there was a pre-Capitalist "gift economy" Eden when faculty managed their own publications and universities saw to publishing their own faculty, "tending to their own gardens," rather than contributing to the global enterprise of scholarly publication, it was ended with a bite of the apple of professionalism by both libraries and presses—that is, in the modernization of publication, distribution, bibliography, collection, and preservation of knowledge. Returning to a however algorithmically-enhanced, institution-specific system modeled on that of pre-War America in our own time of increasingly networked scholarship and amid a complex, highly commercialized information ecology would involve a lot of devolution by both presses and libraries.

III: The Monograph

At the center of the debate over the future of scholarly communication—and the future of university presses—lies the humble monograph, of which libraries complain they do not get enough use and presses complain they do not get enough sales. Someone always seems to be to blame for the monograph—authors for writing them, publishers for publishing them, libraries for not buying them. A recent blog post from the

Chronicle of Higher Education's estimable Jennifer Howard carried the impatient headline "Ditch the Monograph." Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in her book *Planned Obsolescence* proposes that scholarship could be better carried out in blogs than monographs. And my own author, the media scholar and philosophical provocateur Ian Bogost, diagnosed in his recent *Alien Phenomenology* that too often scholars write "not to be read, but merely to have written."

This concern is not a recent one. An early, almost annoyingly charming promotional piece from 1937, "Some Presses You Will Be Glad to Know About," profiled ten scholarly presses—one based at a library—and cites the origin of the modern university press as coming from the universities' realization "that it was unfair to expect the average publisher to market books possessed of such little popular appeal but at the same time such real importance." The University of Chicago's Andrew Abbott confirms that as early as 1927, there were complaints about "the overproduction of second-rate material," scholar's "excessive specialization," and the difficulty of publishing "important work with such small audiences." There it is, the monograph crisis in utero, some 85 years ago.

So what is the scholarly monograph, and why are we still publishing them? The Webster's definition of a monograph is "a learned treatise on a small area of knowledge," and most other dictionaries follow suit. But for scholarly publishing purposes, I have my own definition: "a monograph is a scholarly book that fails to sell." At the time when the University Press Ebook Consortium (now part of Project MUSE) was forming, I found myself in a heated argument with a fellow university press director on whether there was any such thing as individual, non-library purchasers of scholarly monographs. After an hour, I finally realized that he exempted from his definition of "monograph" any book that actually sold or had significant course use or bookstore sales. Monographs, thus, are what we in university presses call the books that don't sell.

As that anecdote suggests, I could talk about this for an hour. But let's look at the sales profiles of two revised humanities dissertations by

untentured authors, published the same season by my press. One sold twice as many copies as the other, and while library sales made up an overwhelming total—over two-thirds—of the sales of the money-losing "monograph," they were well under half of the successful "scholarly book." Again these are both revised dissertations by untenured faculty in English departments.

Now look at a non-monographic scholarly book by a senior academic that came out the same year—one of those "midlist trade books"—and you'll see the library share of sales goes down to below 20%. So where we've relied on libraries the most is with the books that don't recover their costs—the books we publish for reasons of mission rather than sustainability.

In the economics of university presses, the two "scholarly" books helped pay for the "monograph" and others like it. When open access advocates make the point that most scholarly authors do not benefit monetarily from sales of their works (they do, of course, benefit significantly from the status of having published them with university presses), that criticism is, strictly speaking, accurate. What happens, rather, is in the manner of the scene of the bank run on the Bailey Savings and Loan in Frank Capra's beloved "It's a Wonderful Life," the money made from Author B and Author C's books are reinvested by the Press in the one by Author A. Unlike the predatory bank owned by the magnate Mr. Potter (by which we might read Elsevier), university presses do not exist to make a profit or serve shareholders, but rather to allocate investment and distribute risk. And when you consider that the AAUP, and the modern university press, was founded at the height of the Great Depression, this all makes sense.

The Bailey Savings and Loan did not provide "open access" to money—it was not part of a pre-Capitalist "gift economy." Rather it distributed costs and reinvested revenues across the community of Bedford Falls much in the manner of Social Security and Medicare or, for that matter, JSTOR or Project MUSE. And ask a scholarly publisher—you can hear a bell ring every time a monograph sells well-enough to gain its wings as a scholarly book.

IV: Creative Destruction

As I have said elsewhere, the term "open access" has two lives: one as a description of the increasingly vigorous environment for freely-shared scholarship and the other as a political term and economic cudgel. Open access as practice, as in the digital humanities, can coexist with and enrich the existing system of formal monograph and journal publication and, I believe, even relieve some of the financial pressure that besets it. Open access as oppositional rhetoric, as struggle to the death, promises instead a long stretch of turmoil, of "creative destruction," but with the potential for a utopian outcome. Utopias, however, being notoriously difficult to achieve in anyone's lifetime and often accompanied by unintended consequences. As Donald Waters, the Program Officer for Scholarly Communication at the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation observed in a talk at the University of Michigan Libraries in 2007, later reprinted in the Michigan Library-sponsored open access *Journal of Electronic Publishing*, the issues surrounding open access publishing "may not be as straightforward as they appear to those partisans who are actively engaged in the debates." Waters later elaborates: "open access [needs to] be balanced against the need for sustainability. It may be in the public interest to mandate open access, but it may equally be a failure of public trust if such a mandate is not balanced by consideration of a requirement for sustainability so that the content and the publisher endures."

When I listen to open access advocates talk about the "broken" system of scholarly publishing, what I hear is cable news political pundits talking about how Social Security and Medicare are "broken" and need to be replaced by mutual funds or vouchers—the prelude to solving a problem in our neoliberal epoch is always destroying rather than reinforcing what is already in place. The economic term for this is "Creative Destruction," as elaborated by Austrian-school economist Joseph Schumpeter in opposition to the Keynesian economics that guided New Deal programs of the 1930s. In our time, "Creative Destruction" has come to be seen as essential for economic

growth, its "disruptions" necessary for the creation of the new. In the Urban renewal that swept American cities in the 1950s and 1960s and in the replacement of public transit systems such as Los Angeles's streetcar network by highways (highways that themselves became clogged with traffic, necessitating the current reconstruction of LA's streetcar network at great expense), we can see the effectiveness of "Creative Destruction" in spurring new development as well as its unintended consequences of making a desert of the public sphere. As the geographer David Harvey described the process, "old places have to be devalued, destroyed, and redeveloped."

In our own world of scholarly publishing, a recent example of "Creative Destruction" was the decision, later rescinded, to close the "broken" University of Missouri Press and replace it with something new and "next generation" for which, the newly-arrived software-entrepreneur President of the University later admitted they didn't yet have a plan. One open access blogger hailed the threatened closure as a "positive bellwether for a healthy shift in emphasis from one model of scholarly publishing to another," without, of course, specifying what that "another" consisted of. As a tide of resistance to the closure to the University of Missouri Press rose from scholars, authors, university donors, readers, booksellers, public librarians, and the editorial pages of every newspaper in the state, many of us in university presses nevertheless fretted that our colleagues in the academic library world, our long-term allies, were largely if not entirely silent.

I am not going down the road of righteous indignation here. Indeed, the threatened Missouri closure was in the news at the same time as the Georgia State case, and the academic library community could itself feel our long partnership was being betrayed. Both Missouri and Georgia State strike me as warning signs that we are failing to openly and collaboratively solve the challenges that face both our professions in the digital transition. I continue to believe, as I said when I last addressed this audience in 2009, that "if we're not in this together, we should be" for the good of scholarly communication and the university as a whole.

V: Evolution

In place, then, of Creative Destruction, I propose a model of evolution, or continued co-evolution of presses along with libraries. Arguably, libraries and presses have been evolving in different directions, but if that divergence gets much wider it will lead to chaos and to a less-rigorous system of scholarly communication precisely at the moment when the explosion of information and discourse demands more interlinked systems.

Some will say, have said, that presses are an evolutionary dead-end—a “dinosaur” —and eagerly await their extinction in the tar pits of the open web, a commercialized mire that, frankly, is just as likely to swallow libraries. But I wouldn’t count presses out. As Leila summarized and Alison’s presentation will provide further testimony, while remaining true to their mission, presses have innovated constantly and continue to do so. A university press launched Project MUSE, and we collaborated eagerly in the creation of JSTOR—cornerstones of Humanities and Social Science scholarship. And the e-book programs on both those platforms have the potential to bring new life and usage even to the disparaged monograph. After all, how many believed that journal back files could gain such usage before the advent of JSTOR?

But there are different forms of evolution, one involving gradual change—hardly visible—and one punctuated change—occurring rapidly, often in response to a moment of systemic crisis and stress. Particularly now, with the economic stress on higher education and the rise of the digital humanities and open scholarship, university presses—and indeed the entire scholarly communication system—are clearly in one of those periods of rapid and critical change responding to stress. And while university presses are evolving, they need to evolve faster—away from a closed system of scholarship and the contained, siloed content of the monograph and journal issue toward the kind of database structure that is implicit in the very system of rigorously confirmed references and notes that underlie all our publications—for truly university press publications were hyperlinked via footnotes

and endnotes decades before the creation of the Internet.

What will this new system look like when fully evolved? What I see ahead for the humanities and social sciences is an intensely innovative, hybridized environment for university scholarly communication—one that encompasses both open access and nonprofit models; scholarship in university repositories and that published by presses in the established forms of e-books and e-journals; large digital humanities initiatives; and a lively constellation of individual and collaborative scholarly blogs, microblogs, and websites.

In many cases, specific research projects will span and flow across all these forms in what I think of as a process of endosmosis and exosmosis, from less concentrated scholarly forms to more concentrated ones such as the monograph and back again.

The environment of scholarly communication, much of it informal and nonprofessionalized, has dramatically expanded in the past decade and within it the boundaries of scholarly publishing, always formalized and professional, and of the scholarly monograph are breaking down—that is a good thing for both presses and authors. In line with the many discussions of tenure reform underway at research universities, the university press mission will, I expect, adjust from encompassing nearly all scholarship to specifically publishing works by authors who have the vocation to be scholarly authors. Not those authors, to repeat Ian Bogost’s taunt, “who write merely to have written” but rather those who write to be read. And while I do not speak for all university press publishers, it is increasingly clear to me that a policy toward copyright that allows scholarly authors to have greater control of their work, to limit the rights they convey to publishers and more actively manage their own works, will help foster this much richer and more diverse scholarly communications ecology. Making that occur is something that libraries and presses should be talking about, rather than lining up on one side or another.

But why are scholarly publishers and specifically university presses needed in this emerging

environment when freely available software make self-publishing an option for any scholar and when libraries increasingly are expanding their own missions to become publishers, but without the presses fiscal burden of cost recovery? The answer for me is that publication by a university press, by an entity with a mission that extends beyond its own institution, means something both academically and economically—it is both an evaluative process of editorial assessment, peer review, and faculty board approval and an evaluating in terms of the press' decision to invest financial and personnel resources in a particular author's work. At a time when the humanities and social sciences are being devalued within the academy, formal publication signals that such works have an economic and cultural value and are more than mere localized academic work product. Over the past decades, university presses have sponsored scholarly work in areas that, in many cases, were discouraged or actively disparaged by university departments themselves—areas such as feminist studies; Chicano Studies; GLBT Studies; and emerging areas of inquiry such as work on tourism, sports, and video games. Literary theory as a method flourished on the lists of university presses long before it had more than a toe-hold in language departments, presses focused on African American history while vestiges of segregation still existed in universities themselves, even areas of science such as human genetics and cognitive science, once both thought of as marginal, were aided by the recognition provided by the presses at Johns Hopkins and MIT. Sometimes accused of rushing to "trendy" areas of scholarship, university presses at their best provide an alternate locus of accreditation for emerging areas of scholarship and scholarly method and, by working across institutional boundaries, help to correct for localized pockets of conservatism. As universities now address their budget crises by combining departments, shuttering interdisciplinary centers, and tightening tenure opportunities, university press imprints will be even more important to innovative and boundary-challenging scholars.

And university presses will survive and continue to evolve for this reason as well—that while new

modes of scholarship continue to forecast “the death of the author,” the author is far from dead. Take it from a university press publisher: They bang down our doors and not just to satisfy tenure and promotion requirements. And scholarly authors care: they revise diligently in response to peer review and editorial feedback, obsess over how their monographs are edited, titled, produced, publicized, and sold. Authorship is more than communication—many of the best academic blog authors are also recent university press authors—and as long as there are scholars who consider themselves authors, there will be university presses.

The Future of the University Press

Alison Mudditt: Okay, so I guess that makes me the ghost of the university press future. I'm going to focus a little bit more on where university presses are heading, and as a relative newcomer to the university press community, though not by any means to scholarly publishing, I'm delighted to be here to talk about the future of the university presses. So, I guess I should start by saying, yes, I do believe that there is a future for us. But I'm also convinced that, as for all traditional content providers, our future looks very different to our past and is going to demand significant and sometimes painful change for us. My perspective, in some ways, is one of an outside/insider. I joined the university press world because I personally believe passionately in the transformational role that scholarship can play in the world, but I also recognize clearly the challenges that we face. Despite my relatively short tenure, the issues I'll talk about today are ones that we spent the past 18 months grappling with in some level of detail at the University of California Press, and so in many cases here I'm speaking from personal experience.

The challenges faced by presses are not that dissimilar to those faced by libraries: declining institutional support, the dominance of commercial publishers in the profitable areas of scholarly publishing, and the growing agenda setting power of the large technology organizations, not to mention the sheer, unrelenting pace of change. But other emerging trends are creating spaces for us to grow into.

Technology enables us to open up content that has been locked away in print for decades. Notions of peer review and quality metrics are changing. Scholars across disciplines are seeking greater control of their intellectual property and trusted partners in that enterprise, and the output of scholarly research is increasingly part of a dynamic collaborative and digital space.

It was Thomas Moore's social critique of 16th century English and European society that coined the word "utopia." In its original Latin, it literally means "in no place"; in other words, that which cannot exist. Although the perfection that Moore envisioned may be unachievable, his powers of imagination allow us to imagine that something better is possible; and from my perspective, it's hard to dispute that much can and should be done to improve the openness, speed, and impact of scholarly communication in the digital age. Like Doug, I would argue that this is not so much that our current system is fundamentally broken as that technology now enables us to meet the needs of our communities in more powerful and immediate ways than ever before. But in focusing on the future, I'm going to steer clear of predictions. As publishers and librarians, I think we've become a little obsessed with predicting and observing trends, and such behavior helps us to create self-fulfilling prophecies. Rather I'd like to see these transformations in the context of some of the forces reshaping scholarly publishing and communication today and the ways in which these are in turn reshaping the mission and strategy of university presses. In my view, this lens serves to highlight the unique and the replaceable roles that presses can and are beginning to play in delivering solutions to the decades of crisis that Doug talked about.

This is one of my favorite quotes from the substantial, and at times somewhat pompous, but I think always well-meaning, archive of guidelines I received when I took over. These are from the guidelines for faculty editorial committee:

The University of California Press has two obligations: one to the scholar, and the other to the whole world of educated *men* (emphasis added [1938 Editorial Committee Guidelines]).

Yes, I am poking a little gentle fun at our past here, but as both Leila and Doug have noted, there is a very real perception that, among some, both on and beyond our campuses, university presses are antiquated, have not kept pace with the dramatic changes in our industry, and have perhaps reached the end of their useful life cycle.

So why has change been so slow? This is true not just of university presses but of all scholarly publishing. Arguably the structure of the industry and its concentrated ownership plays a role—just a handful of companies control over half of the market for scholarly journals, for example. But the newspaper and trade book publishing markets are fairly concentrated as well, and yet they are being disrupted. The biggest difference in the academic world is that there is a large player in between the creators of content, in other words, the researchers, and the audience for that content, that is, other academics and students primarily, and that tends to distort the economics of the business. As university presses and librarians, we all have to negotiate our way through this confusing and frequently contradictory architecture. Moreover, the academic system and academic culture is inherently conservative, and university presses share some of that conservatism. Although there are exceptions, in aggregate we struggle to think beyond the print book—a phenomenon that has been exacerbated by our weighting towards the humanities and social sciences. For all the reasons Doug outlined, this focus has been a challenge for presses for decades, and although it remains at the heart of many of our missions, it is perhaps limited our ability to exploit other opportunities.

But where does that leave us today? Publishers, including university presses and libraries, have come a long way over the last decade, but I suspect that many of us still feel like this on many days. The prevailing industry narrative has become one of gloom and doom. Any discussion of the transformation of the publishing business, whether it's a publishing of books, newspapers or magazines, inevitably focuses on a number of factors. One is the explosion of new sources of content. Whether it is Twitter statuses of a distributed news network or the self-publishing

phenomenon that has been seeing a growing number of authors bypassing the traditional book publishing business; and another factor is the decline of the cost of producing content that the web has enabled.

Disruptive innovation has become the overused term du jour, I would argue, but I think it is only now that we really are entering what I think will be an intense period of truly disruptive innovation. The change of the past decade or so has been largely internal, with new models, products, and services largely coming from traditional players. It's only now that we are seeing outside players enter our markets, and I'm not just talking about Apple and their increasing focus on K-12 and the higher ed space, but newer models and players backed by Silicon Valley Venture Funding. To give two examples, PeerJ offers a new golden open access alternative with a different and potentially game changing business model; and Rubric is the first peer-review service to disaggregate peer review from the traditional structure of both journals and publishers. Both are launching this fall, and undoubtedly there are going to be more to follow.

So what does this tell us about scholarly communication and, in particular, the opportunities for university presses in this emerging ecosystem? I think it helps to be clear about what Clay Christiansen of Harvard Business School was talking about when he coined this term. Disruptive innovation isn't about winning a technology race, but about delivering innovations aimed at a set of customers whose needs are being ignored by industry leaders. The key is to know which trade-offs the customer is willing to make. But Christiansen said that many businesses and startups make a mistake here. That it first appears counterintuitive. Understanding the customer is the wrong thing to do, he said—It's confusing—before going on to explain that what's really important to understand is the job that our customers are trying to accomplish. Steve Jobs probably embodied this ability better than anyone else who has ever lived, and his skill in that underlies Apple's overwhelming dominance of a whole range of markets. Christiansen used IKEA as an example of a company that's been around for

30 odd years and by now probably should have been disrupted, yet no one has managed to copy them or improve the model. That's because, Christiansen says, its true understanding of the job that their customers want to do is paramount. Their customers want to furnish some way today; they're not looking to buy furniture. This is at the heart of what IKEA is trying to offer, and so once they understood that, simple as it may be, they've been able to optimize their entire store flow and shopping experience to meet this particular need.

In the world of scholarly research and communication, university presses and libraries are, I believe, in a unique position to truly understand the job that our users are trying to get done. That job, almost certainly, isn't simply about reading a book or a journal article, and so we need to develop a much more sophisticated understanding of how content is used in scholarly teaching and education workflows. But we sit at the heart of some of the world's most important research institutions with unparalleled access to faculty, students, and data. Perhaps few of us are really leveraging that position right now, but this is, in my mind, where the really distinctive opportunity lies.

In the past, university presses have focused on content. There is absolutely no doubt that we publish top-quality content that retains value and impact for decades, but the old print paradigm of a one-way push of content out to readers and users is gone. It's proving to be more and more difficult to extract value from content alone. Just look at the news media: sure it creates content, but users are free to roam anywhere including to an abundance of free competitors. For our users, whether they're readers, students, researchers, or clinicians, there have been many benefits to these changes. Never before have they had the voice they have today. The impact is broad, exciting, and challenging. Publishing has historically been accustomed to dictating what the reader is able to consume, but readers no longer have to be passive recipients. Suddenly publishers find themselves needing to attract attention and keep user attention. They cannot simply be creators of content. They must also be experts in user

experience, content discovery techniques, as well as skilled experimenters.

The new model of content creation is part of an iterative process in which content is created and reshaped over time often in a collaborative way. As recent studies at Stanford led by John Sack have clearly illustrated, what drives change is not new tools; it's understanding the place of content and publishing in the research workflow and using this to increase productivity. And so a true utopian view would seek to find community solutions that not only are open access in the review process, but effectively facilitate the selection of what is to be read through semantic tools, integrate the journal and monographic literature into other aspects of scholarly communication, such as datasets, research reports, and other gray literature and better connect to research workflows to improve productivity. In this world, the article and the book is but one link in the chain in the conversation that takes place both within, and increasingly beyond, publications. University presses have begun to take advantage of these opportunities in new and interesting ways. The starting point for many of us has been really revisiting and, I think in many cases, reinvigorating our core missions. The commitment to scholarship, and to a scholarship that doesn't always pay for itself, remains unwavering, but many of us have been forced to answer far wider questions: What do we want to accomplish in the rapidly changing industry? How must we adapt to new challenges? How will we serve our universities and our academic mission while growing our revenues and becoming more self-sustaining?

Let me give a few examples of how we have approached these questions at University of California Press over the last year. The reality for us, like many of our sister presses, is that it's incumbent on us to become more financially self-sustaining and to develop more efficient and economic methods of leveraging technology. But how do we achieve this in the current climate? And what is it that clearly and compellingly distinguishes University of California Press? We see a rapidly changing world, but one in which

some things stay constant, including our commitment, our shared commitment to the progressive mission and values of the University of California, and to providing the public leadership that's expected of the world's leading public research university. Our unique passion is for engaged scholarship. We search out and publish high-quality content with the potential to influence important debates and to shape policy.

Let me give you a couple of concrete examples of how this core mission translates into a reinvigorated publishing strategy. The first one for us is about leveraging our location. Based in California, we are at the heart of major geopolitical shifts, leading environmental and social initiatives, globally important research centers, the nation's most productive agricultural region, and the economic and cultural influences drove dramatic demographic and technological change. We believe that our geographic positioning is a crucial foundation for our editorial mission, and we're tapping into this ability through a sort of refocused and expanded editorial program. For example, we've added a couple of new editors in our social science list who are helping us to build an already very successful interdisciplinary list that tackles contemporary problems such as social inequality and economic disparity.

A second example is the way in which we have reshaped our organizational structure to support these new strategies. We focus our resources on core disciplines and markets for a clearer sense of purpose and differentiation as well as for operational economies and efficiencies. This has included thinking about our core programs in a more inclusive manner across research the research and teaching spectrum, and beyond scholarly books and journals. What does it take for us to become the leading publisher in our fields? How do we meet the full range of needs of our key audiences in an increasingly digital format? Our unique visions, missions, and strategies as presses are already reshaping the ways in which we work across our community as well as the products and services that we offer. At the scholarly and research end of the spectrum, these are some of the programs that I'm sure you will all

be familiar with, and I think Project MUSE is a long-standing such collaboration and has recently added books through the University Press Content Consortium. JSTOR, as Doug outlined, has played a critical role in opening up journal back files, and has more recently added current content and now books; and also with Oxford University Press I think is a great example of a large university press sharing its resources and expertise with smaller presses.

These platforms were already vital tools for scholarly research around the globe and now the inclusion of scholarly books on all of them is going to greatly enhance the overall experience for both faculty and students. I think the other thing about these projects is that they demonstrate the ways in which presses have collaborated and innovated, not just together, but with our library customers.

There are also many projects that showcase university presses' capacities to develop entirely new projects. This one example is closer to some traditional models. It's Project Euclid, developed and deployed by Cornell University Library, and jointly managed by Cornell and Duke University Press. It's designed to address the unique needs of low-cost and independent society journals, and through a collaborative partnership arrangement, these publishers have joined forces and participated in an online presence with advanced functionality but without sacrificing their intellectual or economic independence. The result is a vibrant online information community that assures that mathematics and statistics continue to benefit from a healthy balance of commercial enterprise, scholarly societies, and independent publishers.

Moving further away from the traditional print paradigm is the new SAH Archipedia, an authoritative online encyclopedia published by the Society of Architectural Historians and the University of Virginia Press who have been a long time innovator in the digital space. It contains histories, photographs, and maps of more than eight and a half thousand structures and places. They're mostly buildings, but as you explore the Archipedia, you also find landscapes, infrastructure, monuments, artwork, and more. Content will grow over the coming years as other

titles are digitized and as peer-review born-digital content is created. Over time, it will become the resource on information about buildings around the globe. And I think this project also highlights another tremendous advantage of university press publishing and that's the ability to foster and build truly collaborative projects. This was not just a project within the press and the libraries, but involving support from the National Endowment from the Humanities, the American Institute of Architects, and others.

Many university presses, especially those of us at large, public, land-grant universities, have a core commitment to expanding the impact of scholarship through education and public service, and so this is a great new project that is coming out of a collaboration between Purdue University and the university press there. It's based on an extensive archive from the papers of astronauts, such as Neil Armstrong, and aviators, like Amelia Earhardt. The Press has developed a new app, and an app in itself is not truly groundbreaking at this point, but I think what it does is it provides a great example of the way in which the Press is in touch with its parent institution's mission, and Purdue has a really strong focus on trying to engage high school students in STEM disciplines and in partnering with the library to produce this.

And then another example of public service and outreach. For many of us that takes the form of regional publishing. One such early project was designed by the University of Georgia Press and launched some 10 years ago. Today the New Georgia Encyclopedia receives between one and a half and two million hits a month, and is launching a redesigned site next month.

Some have argued that university presses have an inbuilt bias against innovation, and I would argue that the examples we have seen here today demonstrate that innovation is very much alive and well at presses, both large and small. But I care deeply about the future of our presses, and so it is impossible to conclude without a few perhaps provocative observations about where we're headed. Beyond the usual issues of budgets and resources, some of the deepest challenges facing university presses are, I believe, cultural. And there are two key traits that in my view are

significant stumbling blocks to us for progress. The first is that I believe we have been too insular. We self-identify as university presses, and this is all too frequently our world of reference. We are often ignorant of the world of commercial scholarly publishing, and at our worst, we are dismissive of it whether through fear or a misplaced sense of superiority. If we cannot get over this, I think we lose tremendous opportunities to learn from really smart competitors and to introduce a more business-oriented approach to our own presses that is crucial to our survival.

The second is that we have to let go of print. We all recognize that print is diminishing but there is a deep rooted attachment to both print and to the book. I don't believe that either is going to disappear anytime soon, but we've reached a point from which there is no turning back. Entrepreneurs, innovators have long since moved into the digital space, and we risk being left behind if we cannot find ways to extend our work as developers, producers, and marketers of high-quality content into the emerging technologies

space. But I remain hopeful, largely due to the many signs of fundamental change that are emerging. Will this lead us to a digital utopia, a new golden age for university presses?

The reason I am optimistic and excited about our future is not just because of our past achievements, though there is much to be proud of, but because of the tremendous opportunities that lie ahead of us for adding impact and visibility to the transformative scholarship that comes out of our institutions. The current system of scholarly communication is all too often antiquated, inefficient, and plodding. Our future success depends on our ability to understand the job our users are trying to get done. Along with increases in the quantity of and access to information, we need to be developing tools that will help users to make more efficient and expert use of our accumulating knowledge. We don't just need to publish more, we need to make it easier to find the information we require from the increasing oceans of information, and we need to connect what we find with what we already know. Then, utopia here we come. Thank you.